

*Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) tonight released the following statement on President Obama's State of the Union Address.*

"President Obama has articulated a vision for an economy that lifts up all Americans - not just the wealthiest 1 percent. This path forward recognizes that we face a make or break moment for the middle class and those trying to reach the middle class. While our economy has shown encouraging signs of recovery since 2008, the underlying economic problems, which have been evident for decades, continue to hinder our ability to ensure economic security and the promise of America for those who work hard and play by the rules.

"We simply cannot afford to settle for a country where a shrinking number of people do extremely well, while a growing number of Americans can barely get by. Since 1979, the top 1 percent of Americans have seen their incomes grow by 275 percent, and in recent years the top one-fifth of income earners raked in more than the rest of the country combined. To address this crisis we must take bold action to reform our tax code so that millionaires and billionaires no longer pay a smaller percent of their income in taxes than their secretaries and personal drivers.

"We must also invest in rebuilding American infrastructure so that it can sustain a 21st century economy, and restore our manufacturing sector so that we make things in America again. Our schools need to be well funded so that we can retain and hire good teachers who can educate a skilled workforce, and we must shift away from a fossil fuel based economy and towards a sustainable and renewable energy future.

"The path forward set forth by President Obama is a prescription for a stronger America where the dreams we have for our children can come true. It is a sharp departure from the picture of austerity and decline painted by those who are focused on winning the next election instead of winning our future."